



JOINT SCOPING NOTICE

Proposal to Sell and Proposal to Purchase DNRC Trust lands within the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area

July 14, 2017

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is evaluating a proposal to sell state trust lands leased to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) within FWP's Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area (WMA) located in Powell County NE of Deer Lodge. The lands would be offered for sale at public auction in Powell County.

And

FWP is evaluating the proposed purchase of state trust lands leased by FWP within the Spotted Dog WMA.

FWP has nominated state trust lands for sale in accordance with DNRC Land Banking procedures. Under this program the state trust lands would be considered for sale at public auction. The two agencies are also developing a road access agreement that would assure DNRC's ability to access trust land retained on or adjacent to the WMA if this proposal is completed. This land banking proposal is similar to prior nominations made by FWP for sale of trust lands within the Sun River, Blackleaf and Beartooth WMAs in 2016. The Fish and Wildlife Commission has endorsed FWP to proceed with due diligence and negotiations. For further information please see "**Frequently Asked Questions.**"

The primary objectives of the proposed project are:

- Remove trust land ownership from within WMA boundaries
- Allow FWP to own and manage properties within WMA boundaries
- Increase Trust revenues
- Allow DNRC to pursue higher revenue generating lands, land consolidation, and increased public access.

A total of approximately 10,100.91 acres is involved in this proposal. Please see the attached table and map of affected lands.

If the lands are sold to FWP, management of the properties is anticipated to continue in a manner consistent with current management of Spotted Dog WMA. DNRC would be positioned to purchase other properties with the sale proceeds, which would generate higher revenues and provide public access and recreational opportunities.

The purposes of the scoping process are to: involve the affected public, identify all potentially significant issues, help identify possible alternatives, and identify potential sources of information that may be referenced in the environmental review. Each agency is in the public scoping phase of this project. However, due to their unique administrative decision-making processes, each agency will be conducting separate analyses with different timelines. We invite written comments and suggestions concerning this proposal and will share comments received between the two agencies.

Comments must be received by DNRC and/or FWP no later than August 14, 2017.

Mailed or emailed comments may be directed to either of the following addresses. All comments received will be shared between the two agencies:

Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
Southwestern Land Office
Attn: Bob Storer
1401 27th Avenue
Missoula MT 59804
rstorer@mt.gov

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 2 Headquarters
Attn: Sharon Rose
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
shrose@mt.gov

This scoping notice (and attachments) will also be posted on:

- DNRC's website at <http://dnrc.mt.gov/public-interest/public-notice>
- FWP's website at <http://fwp.mt.gov/> (under "News," choose "Recent Public Notices"). Comments may be made directly on this proposal's webpage.

Questions pertaining to the proposal can be directed to either of the following agency staff:

- Brian Robbins, DNRC, phone 406-563-6078, email brobbs@mt.gov
- Julie Golla, FWP, phone 406-381-1268, email jgolla@mt.gov

**State Trust Lands Proposed for Sale in the
Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area
Land Banking Proposal**

Township	Range	Section	Acres
9N	7W	6	317.34
9N	8W	12	640.00
9N	8W	18	640.64
9N	8W	20	640.00
9N	8W	26	320.00
9N	8W	30	641.88
9N	8W	34	640.00
9N	9W	24	480.00
9N	9W	26	640.00
9N	9W	36	640.00
8N	8W	2	436.89
8N	8W	4	599.38
8N	8W	6	264.78
8N	8W	8	640.00
8N	8W	10	640.00
8N	8W	12	640.00
8N	8W	16	640.00
<u>8N</u>	<u>8W</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>640.00</u>
Tract Count	18	Total Acres	10,100.91

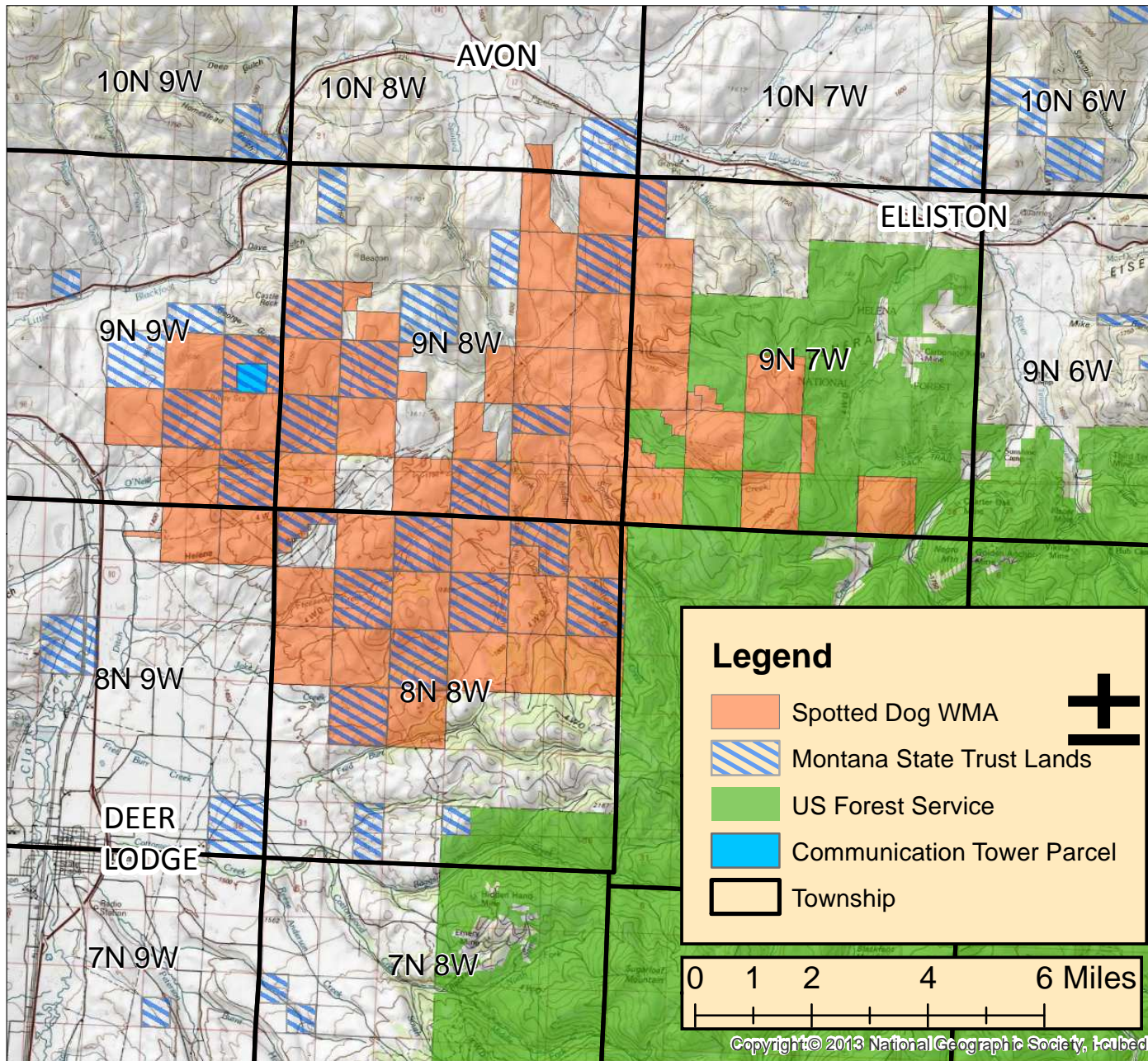


Figure 1. Overview of Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Cross-hatched (DNRC) lands with orange backgrounds are leased by FWP as part of the WMA and are proposed for purchase by FWP. As part of the proposal, the Communications Tower Parcel (160 acres) would be retained by DNRC.